

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL APPLIED RESOURCE SCIENCES CENTER
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In Reply Refer To:
9100 (RS-140)P

March 20, 1997

Information Bulletin No. RS-97-019

To: All State Directors

From: Director, National Applied Resource Sciences Center

Subject: ISTEА Reauthorization

We want to thank you and your State ISTEА Coordinator for all the work and support you have provided in the BLM's implementation of ISTEА. We have gained a lot, both tangible and intangible, in the last few years.

We have had the opportunity to benefit from external funding for construction of many transportation-related projects which have helped provide access improvements to our facilities. We have also benefitted from the increased coordination with our various partners -- old and new -- as we jointly promoted projects of mutual benefit. In addition, the transportation planning coordination is well underway and will continue to be important in the future.

You identified and designated the first phase of the Land Management Highway System (LMHS), a significant step in recognizing the importance of these primary public access routes, allowing both BLM and state/local officials to focus on these routes for determining priority improvement projects. The importance of the LMHS will become recognized as States and federal agencies continue with their coordination of transportation planning and land-use planning.

The status of reauthorization is uncertain at this time, as several different bills have been introduced already. The administration has recently sent its proposal to Congress, titled "National Economic Crossroads Transportation Efficiency Act" (NEXTEA). The primary provisions of NEXTEA for BLM are: Enhancement Program - remains about the same; Recreational Trails - \$7 million per year; Scenic Byways - \$15 million per year; and Public Lands Highways - \$50 million per year (same discretionary rules - national competition).

The bad news is that at the last minute the Office of Management and Budget deleted any reference to dedicated funding for the LMHS, even though the Departments of Transportation and Interior were recommending it. Therefore, any chance of getting dedicated funding will be the result of our partners convincing Congress that dedicated funding for LMHS projects should be included in the reauthorization.

Attached are two items which may be of interest in conveying relevant information to our partners about the importance of the LMHS and needed funding. The first is an Issue Paper titled "Inadequate Public Access to BLM-Managed Lands," and the second is Appendix D to the Federal Highway Administration's "Issue Paper on Federal Lands Transportation Requirements" for reauthorization of ISTEA. These documents have received some distribution already and can be shared with interested parties in your State.

We all look forward to passage of a Highway Act which will help us move forward into the 21st century, with provisions that directly benefit the needs of BLM-managed lands and facilities, while also promoting the economic well-being of the local communities.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact Larry Hoovestol, RS-140, at (303) 236-9510.

/s/ Roland Barkow

2 Attachments

- 1 - Issue Paper (4 pp)
- 2 - Appendix D (29 pp)

Distribution

Director 300, MIB, Rm 5627
WO-360, LS, Rm 406
WO-620, LS, Rm 401
WO-880, LS, Rm 1000
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